

House Regulatory Reform Committee

July 24, 2007

Testimony In Regard to HR 158 and HCR 39

Larry Orlowski, Executive Director Deputy Sheriff's Association of Michigan

Lt. Frank L. Baker, Allegan County Sheriff's Office

Rep. Farrah and honorable committee members, Lt. Baker and I are here today to convey DSAM's support for a tribal-state gaming compact for the Gun Lake Tribe's proposed casino in Allegan County. In addition, all four local association Presidents, representing Allegan County law enforcement and corrections employees, support the compact.

We are not here today to endorse gaming, as it is clear to us that the Federal Courts and U.S. Congress have upheld those rights. We do, however, endorse the concepts of regulation, control that only a compact can provide.

Upon receiving an endorsement request from Gun Lake Tribal Chairman D.K. Sprague, DSAM conducted an in-house investigation into the impacts of Michigan tribal casinos on law enforcement. This was accomplished through personal contacts with Michigan Sheriffs who have tribal gaming operations within their jurisdictions, and a review of crime statistics published by the Michigan State Police. In addition, I personally attended the public meetings held by casino opponents in Allegan County to gain first-hand knowledge of their concerns.

Our investigation concluded that there is no measurable increase in the rate of violent crime, prostitution, or narcotics violations attributable to Michigan tribal casinos. Without exception, the Sheriffs surveyed in our investigation reported excellent working relationships with very capable and trusted tribal police departments. Most tribal police officers and county deputies have been cross-deputized by each respective department, to provide seamless and professional law enforcement services on and off the reservations. We further discovered that, at times, tribal police officers take calls

for the local law enforcement agency if that agency cannot readily respond; further demonstrating great cooperation and coordination of law enforcement efforts.

Sheriffs and police chiefs report that monies from the 2% revenue sharing are adequately funding law enforcement needs and has improved their departments. One sheriff reported that the tribe completely funds a six-officer multi-jurisdictional traffic unit. The revenue he receives fully funds and equips a twenty-two officer SWAT team. Local revenue sharing has allowed sheriffs to purchase equipment they would not have been able to afford, such as: in-car computers and camcorders; global positioning systems for patrol cars; new scuba diving equipment; laser finger print systems; and bullet proof vests for officers. Section 16(B) (6) (a) of the Gun Lake Casino Compact specifically identifies law enforcement, fire, and public safety services as the highest priorities for distribution of local revenue sharing.

This compact is about regulation and the ability of law enforcement to adequately respond to the public demands created by a project of this magnitude.

Gun Lake tribal leaders have signed public safety agreements to guarantee funding for law enforcement services with Allegan County and the Allegan County Sheriff, fire services with the City of Wayland and Wayland Area Emergency Medical Services. DSAM and the Allegan County local law enforcement and corrections association presidents endorse the Gun Lake Tribe's effort to secure a Class III gaming compact with the State of Michigan. To maximize the benefits to State and Local Government, law enforcement, and public safety, a gaming compact should be signed by the State of Michigan. We request that the State of Michigan enter into a compact with the Gun Lake Tribe.

Thank You.